

can will general-
emselfes a witch

nett said many adherents
of the Wiccan faith sub-
scribe to a rigorous ethical

brought the religion even
closer to the mainstream
by hosting Wiccan pride

Sunday. He can be
reached at celtwytche@
gmail.com.

Trophy hunting: Unbearable

I have no quarrel with hunters. As a matter of fact I admire the man or woman who goes out and harvests his or her own protein. Such people are less hypocritical than oh, say, me. I harvest my protein from the local supermarket, letting someone else do the dirty work of shifting said protein from the forest or the feedlot to my dinner plate.

I respect subsistence hunters, but trophy hunters — people who hunt just for the thrill of killing something big?

You suck.

I'm thinking specifically of one Clayton Stoner, a B.C. boy who recently had his picture taken holding up the severed head of a grizzly he shot on the B.C. coast near Bella Bella. Mister Stoner wasn't interested in the body of the bear — he left that to rot on the forest floor. He just wanted the bragging rights to the head.

Must have been real tough to shoot the grizzly, which was known as "Cheeky" to the folks who knew him. I imagine Cheeky was shambling toward Mister Stoner looking for a handout about the



**Arthur
Black**

WIT & WHIMSY

time the heavy-calibre bullets smashed into his chest. Or maybe he was just standing on his hind legs sniffing the wind and wondering what the odd creature in camouflage clothes squinting down a shiny stick was doing in his neighbourhood.

Oh well, it's not as if Mister Stoner is singular in any way, or breaking the law, come to that. Killing grizzlies is big business in British Columbia. The province sells killing rights in two trophy hunts every year. Between 2001 and 2011 nearly 3,000 grizzlies — 900 of them females — were "legally" slaughtered by trophy hunters.

Is this a popularly supported money maker for the government? Hardly. First Nations oppose it, environmentalists decry it — and 80

per cent of all British Columbians want it stopped.

Especially since the government handles it so ineptly. Each year the number of kills exceeds the limits set by bear-management policy. There are only about 15,000 grizzlies in the entire province. By sanctioning the slaughter of more than 300 prime animals a year we're cutting it fine. According to biologist Kyle Artelle, grizzlies "have great difficulties recovering from population declines. A sow may have a litter of three young every three years."

What's even scarier: we only think there are 15,000 grizzlies left. It's a government estimate — from the same geniuses who ran the east coast cod fishery into extinction.

It's a dangerous game to play, risking the future of a magnificent species just to satisfy the fantasies of men suffering from the twin afflictions of too much money and penile inadequacy. If we must have blood money, how about a trophy hunting season on... trophy hunters?

I'm sure even Darwin would approve.